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Governor Schweitzer Announces New Record High for Montana's Commodity Exports

(HELENA) – Governor Brian Schweitzer today announced Montana's commodity exports increased by nearly 35 percent to reach a new record high of \$1.74 billion in 2007. This marks the state's fourth consecutive year of export growth and its third consecutive year of record sales. Bulk shipments of wheat led all commodity exports with \$613.4 million in sales, an increase of nearly \$203 million over 2006.

"Montana is on the move. Over the past five years Montana has had the second highest annual growth rate in export value in the nation," said Governor Schweitzer. "We have seen an increase in both our exports and in manufacturing employment, and Montana is one of only 22 states to see this growth."

"Montana is leading the nation in export commodities," said Anthony Preite, Director of the Montana Department of Commerce. "We have a wealth of commodities for export and these record setting numbers show that Montana is a true contender in the world marketplace."

Among manufactured products, record setting exports were set by many commodity groupings.

- Shipments of inorganic chemicals increased by 37 percent, totaling \$264 million in 2007. With the latest record-setting year, Montana exports of inorganic chemicals have increased ten-fold since 1996. Exports of ores, slag and ash more than doubled to total \$150 million for the year.
- Vehicles, parts, and accessory items exports topped \$100 million for the first time, reaching \$101.4 million in 2007.

- Mineral fuel exports also reached new levels, increasing by 28 percent to total \$55.7 million for the year. Minerals, earth, and cement exports grew by 30 percent, \$45.6 million.
- Optics, medical and dental instrument exports increased by 42 percent topping \$27.4 million.
- Pharmaceutical product shipments also grew steadily, exceeding \$25.3 million for a 65 percent increase in exports over 2006.
- Aircraft exports rose by 92 percent rising above \$23.3 million for the year.

Other commodity groups recorded strong sales for the year.

- Exports of dried legumes doubled 2006 totals, reaching \$17.6 million in 2007.
- Electrical machinery shipments increased by 35 percent to \$15.6 million.
- Prepared cereal exports rose by 48 percent, reaching \$14.5 million.
- Copper matte exports increased 15-fold surpassing \$11.1 million for the year while exports of malt topped \$5.6 million in 2007 rising from less than \$400,000 in 2006.
- Wood and wood products shipments recovered in 2007 posting an 11 percent increase to total \$36 million for the year.

A few commodity exports posted declines for 2007.

- Industrial machinery shipments decreased by nine percent, but still topped \$170 million for the year.
- Origin-specific cereal shipments fell by 62 percent to \$12.1 million.
- Iron and steel exports dropped by 25 percent to \$6.0 million.

In the agricultural sector, export sales of live animals increased slightly to \$3.7million.

Excluding exports of Montana-origin wheat made in bulk from west coast grain handling facilities, Montana's top export market for 2007 continued to be Canada with exports of \$584.7 million, an increase of 35 percent over 2006. Japan remained the state's second largest export market with \$101.7 million in export sales, an increase of 20 percent. Germany remained as the state's third largest export market consuming nearly \$58.9 million of Montana exports. Taiwan ranked as the fourth largest export market for Montana commodities, importing nearly \$52.5 million from the state. Exports to China increased by 37 percent, making China the state's fifth largest export destination with \$43.6 million in imports.

In 2007, Montana dispatched 107.8 million bushels of wheat to exporting facilities on the U.S. west coast. According to the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee, the bulk of these shipments are sent to Japan with secondary markets being Taiwan, the Philippines, Mexico, and South Korea.

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